

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. J. RES. 40

To honor the achievements and contributions of Native Americans to the United States, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 12, 2009

Mr. BACA introduced the following joint resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

JOINT RESOLUTION

To honor the achievements and contributions of Native Americans to the United States, and for other purposes.

1 *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*
2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Native American Her-
5 itage Day Act of 2009”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) Native Americans are the descendants of
9 the aboriginal, indigenous, native people who were

1 the original inhabitants of and who governed the
2 lands that now constitute the United States;

3 (2) Native Americans have volunteered to serve
4 in the United States Armed Forces and have served
5 with valor in all of the Nation's military actions
6 from the Revolutionary War through the present
7 day, and in most of those actions, more Native
8 Americans per capita served in the Armed Forces
9 than any other group of Americans;

10 (3) Native American tribal governments devel-
11 oped the fundamental principles of freedom of
12 speech and separation of governmental powers that
13 were a model for those that form the foundation of
14 the United States Constitution;

15 (4) the Founding Fathers based the provisions
16 of the Constitution on the unique system of democ-
17 racy of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy,
18 which divided powers among the branches of govern-
19 ment and provided for a system of checks and bal-
20 ances;

21 (5) Native Americans have made distinct and
22 significant contributions to the United States and
23 the rest of the world in many fields, including agri-
24 culture, medicine, music, language, and art, and Na-
25 tive Americans have distinguished themselves as in-

1 ventors, entrepreneurs, spiritual leaders, and schol-
2 ars;

3 (6) Native Americans should be recognized for
4 their contributions to the United States as local and
5 national leaders, artists, athletes, and scholars;

6 (7) nationwide recognition of the contributions
7 that Native Americans have made to the fabric of
8 American society will afford an opportunity for all
9 Americans to demonstrate their respect and admira-
10 tion of Native Americans for their important con-
11 tributions to the political, cultural, and economic life
12 of the United States;

13 (8) nationwide recognition of the contributions
14 that Native Americans have made to the Nation will
15 encourage self-esteem, pride, and self-awareness in
16 Native Americans of all ages;

17 (9) designation of the Friday following Thanks-
18 giving of each year as Native American Heritage
19 Day will underscore the government-to-government
20 relationship between the United States and Native
21 American governments;

22 (10) designation of Native American Heritage
23 Day will encourage public elementary and secondary
24 schools in the United States to enhance under-
25 standing of Native Americans by providing curricula

1 and classroom instruction focusing on the achieve-
2 ments and contributions of Native Americans to the
3 Nation; and

4 (11) the Friday immediately succeeding
5 Thanksgiving Day of each year would be an appro-
6 priate day to designate as Native American Heritage
7 Day.

8 **SEC. 3. HONORING NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE IN THE**
9 **UNITED STATES.**

10 Congress encourages the people of the United States,
11 as well as Federal, State, and local governments, and in-
12 terested groups and organizations to honor Native Ameri-
13 cans, with activities relating to—

14 (1) appropriate programs, ceremonies, and ac-
15 tivities to observe Native American Heritage Day;

16 (2) the historical status of Native American
17 tribal governments as well as the present day status
18 of Native Americans;

19 (3) the cultures, traditions, and languages of
20 Native Americans; and

21 (4) the rich Native American cultural legacy
22 that all Americans enjoy today.

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